

## **moving in together (mileven week) by urdearestmom**

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**Summary:** El has to smile looking at him. She loves this man too much for her own good; living with him is going to be a ride, but at this point she's sure it's going to be something she does for the rest of her life.

## **moving in together (mileven week)**

yall i'm sorry this is late, i had zero time to write yesterday but i promised myself that i would write something for every theme of mileven week and i don't like breaking promises

but, the prompt for yesterday was: MOVING IN TOGETHER.

hope you enjoy this lil snippet!

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### **Late July 1991, Iowa City, IA**

The last few months, including the second half of second semester and the months of summer break, had been spent calculating costs of living and scouting the classifieds for apartment listings. Finally, at the end of June, Mike and El had settled on a little one bedroom thing close to campus. It was enough for them and had a pullout couch in the living room if anyone ever needed to stay over.

Today, however, is move-in day. They've spent all week figuring out how to pack as much as they can into the hand-me-down station wagon, but it isn't enough. They've managed to fit most of their personal items, like clothes and books and some kitchen appliances they've bought, but the car isn't nearly big enough to fit larger pieces of furniture like their new bed. What they've done is lash the mattress to the roof and Hopper has volunteered himself to drive up with the rest of their stuff the next day.

It's six in the morning when they leave and El is half asleep, so Mike keeps the radio low. He drives with the hum of voices quiet in the background for a while, nothing but his thoughts for company. He's excited to be living with El, on their own. They'd stayed in dorms last year, which, although convenient, meant they lived a floor apart. Sharing an apartment means they get to see each other *all the time*. And what could be better? It's a big step to independence from their parents.

It's sometime around nine when El stirs again, waking up because the car has stopped. They're at a rest stop somewhere in Illinois, where

they both get out to stretch for a few minutes before switching sides so El can drive instead.

Three more hours later, they're about twenty minutes away and it's nearing lunch time, so they drive into the city and sit at a McDonald's for a bit before going on the little way left to their new home. The building is brown brick, nondescript looking and with a rotating door in the entrance, which is probably going to make it really hard to get their mattress in, but they'll manage.

Mike goes inside to the reception to let them know they've arrived while El starts taking small stuff out of the car. She has a pile of boxes (of books and kitchenware, mostly) on the sidewalk before he comes back out with a trolley.

"Hey," he says. "They gave me this for the boxes and they said we can use the side door later because the mattress won't fit through the front."

El nods, still kind of sleepy from having to get up so early. "Okay."

The two of them stack boxes onto the trolley before locking the car and making their way inside to the elevator. Their apartment is on the third floor, where El then stays to start unpacking stuff into the cupboards while Mike goes back out to the car to cart more stuff upstairs. About forty minutes later, he enters the apartment with only a few boxes on the trolley, face red and sweaty.

"Can you come downstairs and help me with the mattress?"

El has to smile looking at him. She loves this man too much for her own good; living with him is going to be a *ride*, but at this point she's sure it's going to be something she does for the rest of her life.

Back outside, the couple works to untie the mattress from the roof of the station wagon and then use the trolley to get it to the side door. Getting it inside is a whole other task but El's a little more capable than most, drawing on a bit of power to make the mattress lighter to lift into the elevator and then down the hall to the apartment. Once it's inside and on the floor of the bedroom, Mike goes back and closes the front door, slumping against it.

"I am so tired," he says. "I don't think I've ever been this tired in my life."

El quirks an eyebrow. "Not even when everything back home was going to shit?"

He huffs a laugh. "Not even then. That was adrenaline-induced all-nighters, there's nothing adrenaline-inducing about moving boxes."

"Hmm," says El. "Maybe I can fix that." She looks at the boombox that she's already removed from its box and placed on the counter and it turns on, automatically tuning to their favourite Iowa City radio station. It's in the middle of blasting Rasputin by Boney M and Mike immediately perks up.

He's grinning when he says, "You know I can't resist making you laugh." His dancing is what makes her laugh. It's so bad that there's no alternative, and she immediately starts giggling as soon as he tries moving to the beat. Mike ends up tripping haphazardly over a box and sprawling on the floor in the kitchen, where he lays silently for a moment before howling with laughter. He lies there until neither of them can breathe, El having sat on the floor leaning against a cupboard, and it's kind of crazy but it's also the best thing ever.

The song ends and fades into the very recognizable intro of Right Here Waiting, and suddenly all Mike can focus on is the way El's eyes are glittering, her face framed by strands of hair that fell out of the bun she pulled it into earlier, lips caught in a soft smile as she looks down at him.

"Do you know something, El?"

"What?" She questions, still smiling.

"You're beautiful," he says, enraptured. "And I love you."

She sighs and closes her eyes, leaning her head back against the cupboard behind her. "You can't say things like that, it makes me want to jump you."

Mike is silent for a second before he starts laughing again. El looks at him with a confused expression.

"Did I say it wrong?" She asks, a smile curving back onto her face. His laughter is contagious.

"Yeah," he answers, still with a laugh bubbling in his throat, "I think you meant it makes you want to jump my bones. Jumping me just means you're gonna beat me up and steal my wallet. Unless you're into that?"

El frowns before she realizes he's joking. Sometimes jokes like these fly over her head, but most of the time she gets them a second later. She shoves his shoulder, not making much of an impact since he's on the ground.

"You're weird."

Mike grins at her. "Do you want to dance?"

She rolls her eyes and stands, pulling him with her. He wraps his arms around her waist and she lays her head on his shoulder, her arms around his neck. The song is almost over, but the couple twirl around, almost tripping over boxes in the process but enjoying themselves nonetheless. It's always a wonderful feeling to be close; being separated for as long as they were as kids was devastating.

With the closing notes of the song, Mike dips El, and as she starts to giggle, silences her with a heartfelt kiss.

"Where'd you learn that, Mister Smooth Guy?" She says, smiling again when he pulls away.

"I may have gained *some* upper body strength since I was a kid," he responds with an air of importance. "Needed it for things like that, among others."

She nuzzles the side of his neck, inhaling the scent of his mom's laundry detergent. The shirt must have been washed last night, then.

"I love you," she murmurs. "I'm so excited we get to live together now."

"Me too," Mike mumbles against the top of her head. "I was tired of getting interrupted by my roommate."

El snorts. "Of course."

Later, they order some pizza from a place close by, having spent the afternoon unpacking but getting more and more tired as the hours went on. The pair end up passing out on their mattress, still in their clothes, and that's how morning finds them: wrapped up in each other's arms, snuggled together as they will be every other morning of their life when the last one is coming, but hopefully tomorrow at the latest. lemme know what you thought of this one!

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